

and especially the talented editors of the "Leonardtown Gazette," who, from the first, personally and through the columns of their paper, gave us unequivocal and, perhaps, indispensable aid. Indeed, that paper has seemed to us much like one of the component agencies of the system, so marked and continuous has been its co-operation.

But the people of St. Mary's favor not only the object, but the organic character of the new system. They like the idea of its oneness, or unity. The same feature distinguishes, as is patent from their origin and history, their own development. Hence the system, as such, receives their prompt appreciation and favor. Everywhere throughout the County, are found cheering evidences of increased interest in popular education, *especially* as it concerns the Public Schools. This is clearly shown by our statistics, and the fact that Private Schools have become fewer from want of support.

On the 12th day of September, 1865, our Board organized, appointed Mr. George Combs, Secretary and Treasurer—a most excellent appointment—and ordered the schools to be opened on the 20th of the same month. The opening of these schools so early after organization, was premature, as it prevented attention to condition of school houses, and compelled employment of teachers without the thorough examination required by the system. The Board had scarcely been organized, when, from declension, resignation, and removal from the County, but one member remained, and, of course, the work of supervision suffered. The three vacancies were at length filled by the appointment of Messrs. Albert Young, George I. Spalding and Edward S. Abell, gentlemen well qualified and with hearts for the work. The Board, thus composed, began their work by inspecting the field of operations which was found as follows: Thirty school houses, a few of which were tolerably comfortable, but the majority unfit to be occupied, especially in inclement weather. Not one had suitable seats or desks, and as to appliances indispensable to the work of teaching, there were none, save here and there a solitary black-board—a sable witness of the exit of chaos—but sure harbinger of approaching order.

With *such* houses, how can the system fulfil its promise? How can children be educated in houses uncomfortable and without the necessary furniture and means of instruction? And yet, how can the Board supply the want? The funds at its disposal are not enough to keep schools open during the scholastic year, repair dilapidated houses and build the new ones required. We shall be forced to suspend schools for at least one term, in order to have funds to repair and build. Indeed, some four or five schools are now urgently needed in as many neighborhoods, in each of which are some 25 or 30 children of school-going age, but there is no house in which school can be kept. I suggest that the Legislature